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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MEXICO 002172

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [KCRM](#) [SNAR](#) [MX](#)
SUBJECT: GOM/USG COUNTERDRUG COORDINATION PRODUCES HUGE
PAYOFF

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Classified By: Acting Political Minister Counselor James P. Merz for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (SBU) Summary. Two major successes on 19 and 20 July reinforce the benefits of increased coordination and cooperation among U.S. law enforcement agencies, the Department of Defense, and various components of the Mexican Government. Relying on U.S. intelligence, the Mexican Attorney General's Office (PGR) and the Mexican Navy seized a total of 7.5 metric tons of cocaine as part of an ongoing joint operation called Aztec Eagle. This success story not only reflects the GOM's commitment and capacity to undertake rapid and significant counterdrug operations, but also the cooperation that increasingly characterizes our relationship on law enforcement issues. End Summary

Act One: At Sea

¶2. (C) In the course of a routine maritime surveillance mission on July 19, a U.S. Military Patrol Aircraft (MPA), deployed from the cooperative support location in Comalapa, El Salvador spotted a suspicious, four-engine go-fast in international waters off the coast of Mexico. The MPA passed the coordinates to the Mexican Navy (SEMAR) via official channels. A Mexican naval cutter interdicted the go-fast. Upon boarding, PGR and Mexican Naval personnel discovered 200 bales of cocaine weighing 4,708 kilograms. The PGR arrested the crew of three Mexican nationals and two Colombian nationals and the Mexican Navy towed the non-flagged vessel to Huatulco, Oaxaca in Mexico.

Act Two: On Land

¶3. (SBU) The MPA passed additional information, again through official channels, to SEMAR on other suspect vessels in the area. On July 20, the Mexican Navy found a second four engine go-fast beached near Puerto Angel, Oaxaca. Although initial investigations show that some of the cargo was removed, the Mexican Navy and PGR were able to seize 120 bales of cocaine weighing 2,842 kilograms.

We Share, You Share, We All Share

¶4. (C) The USG routinely shares information with our international partners in order to prevent the trafficking of drugs into the U.S. The information-sharing process works differently in each country and the length of time it takes to get information to the correct action authority sometimes does not allow for arrests and seizures. The process with Mexico has been evolving over time. In the case described above, the MPA relayed its intelligence to the Joint Interagency Task Force (JIATF) South. JIATF South then passed the actionable information directly to SEMAR for real-time prosecution of the suspected vessel. (Note. JIATF and SEMAR exchange information under a non-binding letter of agreement as part of the North American Maritime Security Initiative (NAMSI) End Note.) In addition to the up-front work that led to the seizures, follow-up interviews between Intelligence Action Center (IAC) Specialists and DEA agents with representatives from PGR will lead to a greater understanding of each country's drug enforcement operations and a more holistic approach to drug interdiction.

¶5. (SBU) Comment. These two seizures and arrests represent another success story for Mexico in its efforts to combat organized crime. However, these cases are significant for two other reasons that speak to the potential they auger. First, they reflect the extent to which coordination and cooperation between our countries has grown and contributes directly to concrete achievements. Second, the internal GOM coordination between PGR and SEMAR suggests an improved interagency dynamic in the GOM, the likes of which we don't always see in Mexico. As this type of cooperation both within the GOM and between our countries becomes ever more deeply engrained in the way we all carry out our law

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enforcement responsibilities, successful endgames will only serve to reinforce the importance of true joint cooperation.

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